[230 cont.]
x 648 of prince and a calendar [sic] in which the conditions were stated by which he was recognized as a vassal.

[726] While Ablai and the weak sultans of the Middle Horde, who were his partisans, ravaged Dzungaria with their subjects, the Little Horde was fighting its coreligionists, the Bashkirs. An [721] offense committed by the former produced such a hatred between the two peoples that it has not been entirely eliminated today. In order to describe this event better, we will present a picture of the condition of the Bashkir country at this time.

[669] This people, which had been under Russian domination since the reign of Ivan the Terrible, had often raised the standard of revolt and had been punished for so doing. The misfortunes which caused the revolt of 1735 had scarcely ended in 1742. In spite of the difficult circumstances of this land, which for those seven years had had to mourn the loss and the sufferings of many of its inhabitants, the survivors did not remain quiet for long. On May 18, 1755 they revolted once more. Mutiny broke loose at once and began with the massacre of all the Russians to be found in the country, not only on the same day but almost at the same hour. This revolt was incited by the letters of a [793 721] mullah named Batyr Shah, who reproached the Moslem faithful for obeying Christians and implored every believer in God and Mohammed to take arms, assuring them that those who died [775] in this holy dispute would receive the eternal rewards promised by the Koran. Similar letters were also sent to the Kazan Tatars and the Kazak hordes. The latter took advantage of the [726] occasion and began at once to make raids across the Russian borders under the pretext of supporting the Bashkirs.

The position of the Orenburg line then became extremely critical. It extended over a length of more than 1,000 versts; it was separated from the settlements in the interior and was surrounded by the Bashkirs in the north and [231] the Kazaks in the south. Most of the so-called fortresses and fortified posts had no fortifications at all. The garrisons were weak. In a word, at the slightest reverse all the residents along the border could perish, excepting those defending the fortress of Orenburg.